

20514

THE CRIB OF IOY:

Containing Spirituall Exercise,
for

Christmasse.
S. Steuen.
S. Iohn.

Innocents.
Circumcision.
Epiphanie.

Iohn 7.37.

*In the last and great day of the Feast, Iesus stood up,
and cried, saying: If any thirst, let him come
to me, and drinke.*



LONDON,
Printed for Christopher Purset, dwelling neare
Staple Inne in Holborne, at the signe of
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THE CRIB

OF THE

CONTAINING

THE
LIVES
OF
THE
APOSTLES
AND
EPISTLES



Printed for Christopher Parker, dwelling near
St. Paul's Church, in the City of London.
MDCCLXXII.



TO THE RIGHT
 REVEREND FATHER IN
 God, *Iohn*, by his Diuine prouidence
 Bishop of London.

Right Reuerend, it is
 the custom of all sorts
 of writers, to seeke a
 patrō for their books
 dedicatiō: wherfore I
 the publisher herof, being a poore mē-
 ber of your last flocke (and the Au-
 thor to me unknowne) haue embolde-
 ned my selfe to choose your Lordship
 (knowing none more fit) to be the
 Guardian of this Orphane, vnder
 A 3 whose

whose protection I render both it and
my self: the rather because the earnest
desire of all those who ever read this
little Treatise, intituled, The Crib
of Ioy, hath moued me to the publish-
ing hereof. Therefore, right Reue-
rend, if either the Worke it selfe may
receiue passage through your Lord-
ships good fauour, or my duty towards
you herein may be accepted, crauing
pardon for my presumption, I end,
continuing my prayers for your long
life, with eternall happinesse:

Your Lordships most humbly
to be commanded,

Christopher Purset.



CHRISTMAS DAY.

The three circumstances of person, time, and place, may draw the lineaments of this dayes ioy.

WE may reioyce, that our Saviour and Reconciler to God, was manifested this day, to be a person, and no inferior creature:

That the Iewish sacrifice of beasts, and birds, or other oblations, were not in themselves propitiatorie: but in eye to a worthier Mediatour. It had bene a disgrace to our reasonable soule, the image of God,

to

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Heb. 10. 4.

to haue bene valued at so base a price: An indignitie to God himselfe, to haue had his anger against sinners alayed and his iustice satisfied with the killing of a calfe: a thing vndecent in our conceit, preposterous in nature, vnpossible that the bloud of Bulls and Goates should take away the sinnes of the foule.

2 VVe may much more reioice, that it was not the person of anie man, or Angell, or new made creature; but of God himselfe manifested in the flesh.

Ezck. 14. 14.

If *Noah*, *Daniel*, and *Iob* should stand vp before God, and make intercession for vs; God telleth vs, they should onely saue their owne foules: and yet not that neither, without further mediation. *Noahs* wine must needs be don away with bloud: *Iobs* sinne with sacrifice, and *Daniels* imperfection with mercie.

If a holy Angell should set his puritie betweene God and vs; he might iustifie himselfe: but his white robes of innocencie

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cie were too short to couer our nakednesse.

If anie creature should offer himselfe to death for vs, we might thanke him for his good will; but he had neither authoritie to lay downe his life for another, nor power to take it vp againe for himselfe.

Our Mediatour is *God* and *Man*, one *Christ*. *God*: that he might pacifie and satisfie, by his worth, the person offended; for he is as good as he. *Man*: that he might suffer for the offendor; for he is flesh and bloud of the same nature with vs. One *Christ*: that he might vnite *God* and *Man* inseparably, who were disioyned before by sinne: for the same person, who, as *Man* loueth *man*, being also *God* is infinitely beloued of *God*: the same *Christ* an intercessour for *man* in his manhood, cannot be denied of his *Father* for his Godhead sake. Therefore so long as his humanitie sticketh fast to his diuinitie, tyed with that inseparable knot of the vnitie of person

B (which

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Rom. 8. 38. 39

(which the point of the speare could not dissolue) herein is our reioycing, *That neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate vs from the loue of God which is in Christ Iesus our Lord.*

3 VVe may most of all reioyce, that of the diuine persons, the second was this day incarnate, for in him the loue of God is doubled vpon vs; *God the Father* loued vs before he gaue his *Sonne*: had he not loued vs, he had neuer bestowed so precious a gift vpon vs; but hauing now giuen his *Sonne*, thereby to make vs sonnes, he must needes loue vs one degree more, in that we are his sonnes. *God the Sonne* loued vs before he became man: but being incarnate, we may challenge a degree of loue more, in that we are his brethren. He loued vs before he gaue himselfe: much more now we are his owne, for he hath
dearely

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dearely bought vs. That precious ointment streaming from *Aarons* head; that blessed *Spirit*, which the *Sonne our Sauour*, of his fulnesse distilleth vpon vs, loued vs, in that he ouershadowed the *Virgin* for vs; loued vs, in that he infused faith into vs, renewed our hearts, reformed our wils, sanctified our persons: but shall hee not now loue his handie worke much more, whereupon he hath bestowed such cost? If *God* loued vs when we were strangers, runnagates, rebels; and so loued vs as he then intended to adopt vs: what will a fatherly affection moue him vnto? If the *Sonne* loued vs when we were yet his enemies, and so loued vs, as he forsooke himselfe for vs: is it not intended he will loue his friends, and brethren, heires and fellow-heires of the same kingdome? If the *holy Ghost* loued vs, and so loued vs as he tooke in hand such vntoward prices, such hard hearts, such waiward and crooked affections; shal we doubt, that dwelling in vs, as in holy

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temples, he will not keepe vs in reparations? Thus the triple loue of the blessed Trinitie is multiplied vpon vs; they all loue vs, because they loued vs; they loued vs, that they might loue vs more; they loue vs more, in that the second person, being the naturall Sonne, hath made vs adopted sonnes: in whom God is our Father, and from whom the holy Spirit is deriued.

Reioyce then, that he was a person, and no inferiour creature; a diuine person, and no creature: and againe I say reioyce, in that the second person in Trinitie, the eternall Sonne of God, as vpon this day was borne of a pure virgin.

2. Circumstance.

THat which is good, rare, and bringeth ioy with it, must needs be acceptable vnto vs: but yet more welcome if it come in an acceptable time.

In good time was Christ borne, when
the

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the Scepter was departed from Iuda, and a law-giuer from his feete. VVhen Israel was subiect to the Romanes; and the true Israelites made seruants vnto them that were slaues vnto sinne: then was that little *Stone*, cut out without hands, which dashed the kingdomes in peeces, and became a mightie mountaine. Then was the little *Child of Bethlem* incarnate of the virgin without a father, borne without a mid-wife, swadled without a nurse, preferred without the help of man to an euerlasting kingdome, to rule ouer vs for our spiritual freedome and eternall blisse.

Gen. 49. 10.

Dan. 2. 45.

2 In goodtime vnder *Augustus*, when the world was quiet from the sword, and at leisure to listen after the great field fought for our soules, was our grand Capitaine borne. Then might the Gospell haue a free passage, and the sound thereof be heard from *Bethlem* to *Arabia*; from *Ierusalem* and *Samaria* vnto the ends of the world.

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Mat. 4. 9.

Ioh. 1. 2. 3. 1.

Ioh. 4. 35.

3 In good time, when *Sathan* layed claime to all the kingdomes of the world for his owne, and was inuested with that large title of the *prince*, yea the *god* of this world. VVhen a vniuersall deluge of sinne couered the face of the earth, so as the holy seed of *Abraham* was become a viperous broode: when the regions were white alreadie vnto haruest, and that good corne that was left, readie to shed out of the huske and perish: in this fulnesse of time did the *King of glorie* arme himselfe with the frailtie of humane flesh and bloud to cast *Sathan* out of his kingdome, to purge the world from him, and prepare the good corne for the euerlasting barnes.

3. Circumstance.

Math. 2. 2.

THe birth of this great *King*, is a matter of estate, for he is not crowned, but borne a *King*: the fulnesse of time wherein hee came maketh expectation;
not

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not so much but the *tankerd-woman* of *Samar*
maria lookes for him : expectation makes
 prouision. V Where is then the place of his
 receipt ? V What citie shall entertaine him,
 whose seate is in heauen, and the earth his
 footstoole ? It must be *Ierusalem* at the
 least : For that is the citie of the great
King.

Ioh. 4. 25.

Esai 66. 1.

Mat. 5. 35.

But would you thinke this *King* should
 remoue his court from *Heauen* to *Bethle-*
hem, the least among the thousands of *Iu-*
da ? can you imagine he would take vp a
 stable there for his nurserie, or a *cratch*
 for his chaire of estate, or a poore carpen-
 ter and his wife for his courtiers ? Yet so
 it was, and not without cause. For vaine
 man at his first entrance to the world,
 thought himselfe so goodly a creature, that
Paradise was too little for him ; he must be
 as *God*.

Mich. 5. 2.

Therefore the mightie *God*, to make
 amends, looketh as low as man did high :
 contents himselfe with a little *Bethlehem*,
 the

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Pfal. 72. 6.

the least of a thousand. Miserable men, the sonnes of *Adam*, affect pomp and state too much. God, to reforme that, boweth the heauens and comes downe: nay, boweth himselfe and comes downe, like a showre of raine into a fleece of wooll, and makes no noise.

Act. 21. 39.

Paul was sometimes glad for to grace himselfe with the place of his birth: *Tarsus* a famous citie of *Cilicia*; but hee that bringeth all honour with him from heauen, will grace others, but himselfe be graced of none. Little *Bethlem* shall be honored by his noble birth, when famous *Ierusalem* by his death shall dishonour her selfe. Thus the great *God*, who by birth made himselfe little, delighteth much to make litle things great; so went his *Mother*s song of him: *He regardeth the lowlinesse of his handmaide, and he that is mightie hath magnified me.*

Luk. 1. 48.

If the Scripture names be not emptie, but carrie in them matters of prouidence, then

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then doth this *Child* of *Bethlem* performe what the name of *Bethlem* did promise; It signifieth a *house of bread*: and this is the *bread of life* which came downe from heauen (vpon this day) into *Bethlem*, like *Manna* in the wildernesse. *Moses* tels vs, that bread was a small round thing vpon the grasse. The Angell tels vs, this is a little *Babe*, layd in a manger: and yet this manger containeth more foode then the wildernesse and all the barnes in *Ægypt*; for it feedeth *Ierusalem* and *Samaria*, and the ends of the world.

Ioh. 6. 33.

Exod 16. 14.

Luk. 2. 12.

VVrite this then in the catalogue of this dayes ioy, that *Christ* was borne in *Bethlehem*. 1. If it grieue thee that euer thou wast proud or high minded, reioyce that *Christ* in *Bethlehem* became as lowly as euer thou wast loftie; amends is made. 2. If thou be little and base in thine owne eyes, reioyce; he that chose the least of the thousands of *Iuda*, will magnifie thee. 3. If thy soule long for foode, and desire to be satisfied,

C

fied,

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Hose. 4. 15.

fied ; come downe from *Bethauen* vnto *Bethlehem*, from that house of iniquitie (which neuer brings contentment, but vanitie and vexation) vnto this house of Angels foode, that blesteth the soule with euerlasting felicitie.

2 *Bethlem* was but a little towne, yet a towne though ; therefore some varietie of houses, though but small. Amongst these hee makes resort to an Inne. It seemes there was but one in the towne, and yet he makes choise of that. Me thinkes he comes into the world, as though hee meant not long to stay. If he that built heauen and earth, will neither build, nor so much as hire an house for himselfe on earth, but take vp an Inne ; his purpose is in short time to returne home to his Fathers house. And this also is glad tidings for vs. For he hath giuen his word ; if he go before, we shall not tarrie long after ; he is but gone to prepare a place for vs. In his Fathers house, there be many mansions, not made
with

Ioh. 14. 2.

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with hands, but eternall in heauen. Here we are strangers and pilgrimes, and way-faring men; euen our fathers house where we are borne, is but an Inne; here to night, and gone to morrow: but our surest home, our kindest Father, our truest ioy and felicitie is in heauen, else are we of all others most miserable.

3 VVhat entertainment *Christ* found in this Inne, is worth the enquirie. *S. Luke* telleth vs, there was no roome for him; yet roome enough for bibbers and blasphemers. I make no question then: the *Sonne of God* finding no roome in the Inne amongst men, betakes himselfe into the stable amongst the beasts; and yet whether worse beasts were in the Inne or stable might beare a question. This Inne was not the holiest house in the towne, nor this stable the cleanest place in the Inne; yet this holy one of *Israel* comes to an Inne: *for he came not to call the holy, but sinners to repentance.*

Luk. 2.7.

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This *Sunne of righteousness* may shine through a dunghill, and yet the beames thereof gather no pollution: albeit I must needs blame the Inne-keeper, who assigned our *Sauour* his birth-chamber in a stable (like some mightie men, who build themselues stately pallaces, and if they haue any roome bad enough, it is good enough for a chappell) yet, herein doth consist some part of our Christmasse ioy, that *Christ* tooke a stable and made it a temple, where the *V* Vise men worshipped and offered oblations. Shall we then doubt of his abode in our hearts by his Spirit, whose personall presence disdained not a stable? Be it, that we are more vncleane then stables, polluted with sinne and corruption, inhabited with many beastly affections, like horse and mule without any vnderstanding; like vntamed haifers or wilde asse colts without yoke or bit; yet the presence of his diuine Spirit will humble our affections, cleanse our soules, and sanctifie

Mat. 2. 11.

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sanctifie our members, to make them temples of the holy Ghost.

4 The worst roome in the Inne was too good for him, but (thankes be to God) he hath gotten the best roome in the stable, swaddled and layed in a manger; and why? in this place there was none but his friends, and those that loued him well. His mother sought out the most sweete and soft place in all the stable, to repose the immaculate and tender *Lambe of God* in. If any beast was there present to feede in the manger (as likely at this generall taxing, when the Inne was so full, the stable was not emptie) the very instinct of nature did teach them to know their owner, and their maisters crib; and after their fashion to worship the *God* of nature. If sinfull man be that stable wherein the *Sonne of God* doth vouchsafe to repose himself, assigne him the best roome, lay him in the manger, giue him thy heart, where all thy affections vse to feed and solace them-

Luk. 2.7.

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Luk. 15. 10.

selues, and that heart shall feele a heauenly ioy within it, a peace of conscience which passeth all vnderstanding; it shall send ioy into heauen amongst the Angels, who reioyce ouer one sinner that repents: it shall fetch downe Angels from heauen, with a companie of heauenly souldiers, to sing glorie to God on high, in earth peace, and to pitch their tents about thee.

Prou. 27. 1.

A man knowes not (saith Salomon) what a day may bring foorth. Verily, if one day brought foorth thus many ioyes when it brought forth the Sonne of God: well may we crowne it with the Psalmist his Epiphonema: This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will reioyce and be glad in it.

Psal. 118. 24.

S. STE-

The Crib of Loy.

S. STEVEN.



When the Sonne of God had put on man, and couered his Deitie with a veile of flesh, for dazeling our eyes, great things by him were both done and suffered for vs. After that man therefore by vertue of those sufferings, shall haue put on Christ, it is very meete, that in token of thankes, some thing be done and suffered by man for the name of Christ. *Non decet sub spinoso capite membrum esse delicatum:* since the Head was crowned with thornes to saue the bodie, let not the foote disdain to catch a thorne in defence of the head: since Christ fought for vs in our owne flesh till he sweat againe, and sweat till he bled, and bled till he died: let this blessed Martyr teach, that the purest bloud in our sinfull bodies is not too precious to be powdered out for his Gospel.

Rom. 13 14.

Bernard.

All

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All confesse this to be true, but some say it is too tragicall: a farre vnfit meditation for this *Feast*: these bloudie dayes of *Steuen* and *Innocents*, might better haue bene referred vnto *Lent*, to accompanie *Good Friday*. For there be many wise men, both from the East and VVest, will with ioy honour *Christ* in the *cratch*, that would be loth to follow him to the *crosse*.

Act. 26. 29.

S. Paul did fit the Kings humour well, wishing that *Agrippa* were a whole Christian altogether like himselfe, except those bonds. For if Christianitie inflict bonds, or draw bloud, it is vnsauorie. Vnsauorie indeede vnto flesh and bloud: but he that hath well tasted of *yesterdayes* ioy in the birth of a Sauour, shall find it not allayed, but well seconded by *this dayes* martyrdom.

Act. 5. 41.

The Apostles reioyced that they were accounted worthie to suffer for his name: then sure there is some matter of dignitie in suffering: and if they reioyced therein, why

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why should we be sad vpon this day? *Christ* told vs before: *If I were lift up from the earth, I will draw men vnto me.* It seemeth there is some hidden vertue in the crosse of *Christ*, knowne to none but those that feele the power of it; by which he enticeth men to follow him with delight, euen vnto death. Therefore saith *Paul*, *I take pleasure in reproches, in necessities, in persecutions, in anguish.* It is honorable (thinkes *Haman*) to be set vpon the Kings owne horse, and haue it proclaimed before him: *This shall be done to the man whom the King will honour.* Our King of Heauen was neuer better mounted on earth then vpon an Ass and a Crosse. The Kings on Palfreies: that, to teach humilitie; this, to arme vs with patience: this shall be done to the man whom this King will honour. VWhich makes *S. Paul* to glorie in nothing but in the Crosse of *Christ*; who still, as he is preferred to greater dignitie in the Court of *Christ*, assumeth to himselfe more honorable titles:

Ioh. 12. 32.

2. Cor. 12. 10.

Ester 6. 9.

D

To

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To the Romanes, Corinthians, and the rest. Sometimes he calls himselfe *an Apostle*, somtimes a *Servant of Christ*; but the last of all is the most glorious, in his Epistle to Philemon: *Paul a prisoner of Iesus Christ*. It is a Christian paradox: yet that Apostle putteth vs out of doubt, preferring it before the best, in his 2. Epistle to the Corinth. 11. 23. *They are ministers of Christ, I speake as a foole, I am more: why? In stripes aboue measure, in prison more plenteously, in death often, &c.*

3 There is a glorious companie of the Apostles, a goodly fellowship of the Prophets, but a noble armie of Martyrs, as our Church hath well sung. A noble and a royall armie indeede: for there is no armie or hoast of God in heauen or earth, which fighteth so like the King himselfe, as the Martyrs do, which ouercome by suffering; for which victorie Steuen doth now enioy that which his name did signifie, a crowne, an eternall crowne of glorie.

If

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If martyrdom then be delightfull, that Saints take pleasure in it: if it be to be affected as honorable, that the Apostles glorie in it: if as noble and royall, it will crowne vs with glorie; let it not grieve vs to reckon it amongst our Christian triumphs. The standard-bearer of this royall armie was *S. Steuen*, the first Martyr in strict proprietic of speech that euer was, the first witnesse of the Gospell of Christ, that confirmed the same with his bloud. The *Innocents* lost their liues for *Christ*, but it was in them no voluntarie oblation. *Iohn Baptist* bare record of *Christ*, but he died for a Legall truth: *It is not lawfull for thee to haue thy brother Philips wife*. *Peter* resolved to haue laid downe his life for *Christ*; but hee was too weake. Verily it was decreed, that no man in zeale should lose a drop of bloud for the witnesse of *Christ* or his Gospell, before *Christ* in the abundance of loue had shed his precious bloud for the loue of man. After *Christ* had finished his course,

πρῶτος μαρτυρ.

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and was set at the right hand of his Father, the first that entred the lists, was this valiant Martyr *Steuens*, who fought three notable combats: one in the schooles, another before the councell, and a third at the stake.

1 Out of the Colledge came Libertines, Cyrenians, they of *Alexandria*, *Cilicia*, of *Asia*, and disputed with him, and were not able (saith *Luke*) to resist that wisdom and spirit by which he spake. VVisedom without spirit, had bene ouer dull and sottie; so many to one might easily haue ouercrowed him. Spirit without wisdom, had bene furie, exception might haue bene taken to his intemperancie: but *wisdom* going before as a guide, and *spirit* following to set an edge vpon it, this victorie was easily got.

2 Since arguments could not preuaile, of disputers they became sergeants, they ranne vpon him, caught him, and brought him to the Councell, suborned false witnessses, and produced them against him.

Act. 6. 9.

vers. 10.

vers. 12.

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him. VVhereat *Steu*en was so litle daunted, as all that sate in the Councell saw his face as the face of an Angel; not onely for confidence and maiestie, which was Angelical, but especially that heauenly ioy possessing his heart (in that he was counted worthie to suffer reproch for *Christ*) made him a cheerfull countenance. This heauen he felt within him, and lifting vp his eies he saw another about him, readie to receiue him, and *the Sonne of man standing at the right hand of God*. Did *Steu*en espie him standing, whom *Paul* affirmes to *sit at the right hand of the Maiestie*? It is true, the King of glorie sits vpon the throne in the highest places. But while his blessed Martyr *Steu*en shall stand before the Councell as a witnesse for *Christ*; *Christ* will appeare standing before his Father, as an intercessour for *Steu*en.

vers. 15.

Act. 7. 56.

Heb. 1. 3.

3 Iustice will not conuict him; they make a tumult, stoppe their eares (lest his words might pierce their hearts, run vpon

Act. 7. 57.

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verf. 58.

him all at once. The reasons and accusati-
ons are blunt, stones be sharpe enough)
they cast him out of the citie, and stone
him: and yet herein is his greatest triumph;
for he commends his soule by faith vnto
God; his praier in charitie for his persecu-
tors; and both were accepted of: his soule
receiued and crowned with glorie; and
the young man *Saul* at his conuersion en-
ioyeth the fruite of *Steuens* prayer.

If Martyrs then be so happie, so wise, so
valiant, so chearfull, so Angelicall, that nei-
ther schoole nor court, nor death nor di-
uell can preuaile further then to hasten
their eternall blisse: let *S. Steuen* be in the
catalogue of ioyfull daies, and let his ex-
ample arme vs to fight vnder the same ban-
ner.

SAINT

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SAINT IOHN.



Steuen, of a faithfull Christian full of the Spirit, was made a Deacon, a Martyr, a leader of that band.

Iohn, of a Disciple whom *Iesus* loued, became an Euangelist, an Apostle, as an Eagle flying higher in diuine mysteries, and looking more steadily vpon *the Sunne of righteousness* then others.

Steuen glorified God by his death; *Iohn* by his long life. *Steuen* by sowing his bloud; *Iohn* by planting the Church in diuers nations, did glorifie God.

Steuen by his example taught vs how to suffer: *Iohn* foretold in his Reuelation what things we must suffer: both arme vs with patience in persecution. *Steuen* offered himselfe at once: *Iohn* by peece-meales; whose life was a continuall martyrdome.

Reuel. 1. 9.

This

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This Disciple excelled the rest in three prerogatiues.

I He was beloued of *Iesus* aboue others: he writ more of his owne knowledge which he had seene with his eies, and heard with his eares, then others; and left greater monuments behind him then others; not of his owne fame, but of the greatnesse of that little *Babe* which lieth in a manger, and yet fills heauen and earth. *Iohn* was knowne by the name of *the Disciple whom Iesus loued*; but then what moued *Iesus* to affect *Iohn* more then the rest, may be curious to enquire, and more difficult to find out, vnlesse it was because he was yonger then the rest of his followers, and yet more constant and resolute. For a yong man to follow *Christ*, it is rare, and therefore amiable. If we vrge youth vnto that, they tell vs (as the diuell told *Christ*) we torment them before their time. For commonly the *prodigall son* is the yonger.

Therefore since *Iohn* was like that purple

Mat 8.29.

Luk. 15.12.

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ple wooll, wherewith *Moses* is said to haue sprinkled all the people, both died in the wooll himselfe with pietie, and an instrument also to besprinkle others with the bloud of *Christ*: it may be for this cause he was more loued then ordinarie. So was yong *Samuel* fauoured of *God*: so was *Dauid*, a man after *Gods* owne heart, for he was a man of *God* from a lad: and so was little *Daniel*, a man greatly beloued (as *Gabriel* telleth vs) vnto whom no lesse reuelations were declared for the old Testament, then were vnto *Iohn* for the new. This louing affection vnto religious youth, our *Sauour* might learne of his *Father*; as *S. Paul* learned of him to loue his yong scholler *Timothie*, to whom he writ as often as vnto any Church which hee had planted. A goodly motiue to shew especiall tokens of familiaritie vnto *Iohn*, in suffering him to aske questions in secret, to leane vpon his breast, and to sucke wisdom from him.

Heb. 9. 19.

Dan. 10. 11.

E

Me

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Me thinks *Iohn* was vnto *Christ* among his Disciples, as *Beniamin* was vnto *Ioseph* among his brethren, twice beloued, and brother on both sides by father and mother. For *Iohn* was the adopted sonne of his heauenly Father by grace, as also of his earthly mother by fauour. For he spake from the Crosse to the *Virgin* of *Iohn*, *Behold thy sonne*, and to *Iohn* he said, *Behold thy mother*.

Ioh. 19. 26.

This was the fruite of his constancie and perseuerance, who staied by it when the rest fled; who spake litle, and held out, when *Peter* said much, and ranne away. A sword pierced through his soule also, as well as his mothers, when his eies beheld the speare pierce the side of his Lord and Sauour.

Luk. 22. 33.

Ioh. 19. 35.

Thus was *Christ* Alpha and Omega vnto *Iohn*, who was Aleph and Thau vnto *Christ*: who began betimes, and held out to the end; marked in the forehead with the letter *Thau*, the last letter of the Hebrew

Ezek. 9. 4.

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brew Alphabet.

2 This is that Disciple which testifieth these things, *and we know that his testimonie is true*. Againe, *That which we haue heard, which we haue seene, which we haue looked vpon, which our hands haue handled of the Word of life, declare we vnto you*. So he ended his Gospell, and so he began his Epistles, who saw, and heard, and felt more then the rest. He saw the Sonne of God in his glorie, he saw him in his full eclipse; he saw him when *his face shone like the Sun, and his garments glistered white as snow*: and againe, when the same face was spit vpon, and his garments deuided. Hee saw him glorified on mount *Tabor* with *Moses* and *Elias*: and after crucified on mount *Caluarie*, betweene two theeues. Hee heard the voice of his Father from heauen: *This is my beloued Sonne, in whom I am well pleased*. Hee heard the lamentable crie of the Sonne of God vpon the crosse: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* After this, he both saw

Ioh. 21. 24.

1. Ioh. 1. 1.

Mat. 17. 2.

Mat. 27. 30.
verf. 35.

verf. 38.

Mat. 3. 17.

Mat. 27. 46.

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Reuel. 1. 4. 9.

and heard those heauenly misteries in that Ile of *Patmos*, which this of *England* doth now enioy: those diuine Reuelations, written by *Iohn* to the seuen Churches of *Asia*, which are at this day extant in all the Churches of *Europe*.

Ioh. 1. 1.

Reuel. 21. 10.

3 He hath left behind him three monuments of especiall note: I meane not his threetitles, of *Iohn* the *Euangelist*, the *Apostle*, the *Diuine*: but his three works, his *Gospel*, *Epistles*, and *Apocalypse*. The first beginneth from afore all worlds, faire aboue *Moses* his beginning of the creation, *In the beginning was the Word, &c.* The last describeth that heauenly *Ierusalem*, which endureth past all ages. The first is a narration of the Gospell of *Christ*; the second, an exhortation vnto the pietie of Saints; the third, a reuelation of the state of the Church. The first teacheth faith; the second charitie; the third, hope and patience: sufficient to make a man perfect in *Christ*. This *Apostle* our Church hath placed in this Feast of the Natiuitie,

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Natiuitie, to the end to teach vs, who that
Babe was which was borne at *Bethlehem*.

INNOCENTS.



Aruell not that children make
vp this traine, for vnto vs a Esa. 9. 6.
Child is borne, and such a one
as euermore delighteth in lit-
tle ones, like his *Father*; to whom was ne-
uer sacrifice more acceptable of beasts
then lambes, of birds then yong pigeons.
This *Lambe of God* carrieth the same mind:
Suffer little children to come vnto me, and for- Mat 19. 14.
bid them not, for to such belongs the kingdome
of God. And if the kingdome belong vnto
them, good reason they should belong
vnto the King: yet neither they nor the King
shall enter into this kingdome without
bloud. Gen. 4. 8.

So I thought, when God placed a sword
at the gate of *Paradise*; his meaning was, Gen. 3. 24.

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Mat. 2. 16.

none should come there againe without losse of bloud. Thus passed *Habel* (the first in the old Testament) by his brothers sword: and these *Innocents* the first in the new Testament, vnder *Herods* sword and the rest.

Mat. 7. 14.

Some going before, some following, and the *King* himselfe in the midst, by whose sole vertue and authoritie it was, that both to them before, and vs following, the gate of heauen was open, else had there bene no passage at all. Yet for all this, the *King* telleth vs, *The gate is strait, and there be few that go in thereat*, therefore we must striue if we meane to enter. The impediments which make the passage so difficult to vs, be three in number; all which the example of those *Innocents* teach vs to auoide or ouercome.

Act. 14. 22.

Mat. 16. 24.

I First the sword of tribulation, for by many tribulations must we enter into the kingdome of God. Therefore if any will be my disciple (saith our Sauour) let him take up his

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his crosse, as I haue done. This let, they ouer-
came by suffering, and got more by *Herod*
his sword, then if they had bene maintai-
ned at his owne exhibition. Let not this
stop vs then: for why should any child of
God be lesse patient in suffering one death
for an euerlasting kingdome, then *Herod*
was cruell, inflicting many deaths for an
earthly kingdome.

2 If *sinne* lie at the doore, it will stop our
passage as it did *Cains*: whether it be some
great notorious sin, as his was, like a rocke
in the sea, or like a sand, many little ones
heaped together; either of them will dam-
vp the gate, & make the conscience to suf-
fer shipwracke. Therefore to preuent that,
these passengers were Innocents, entring
in this doore before they had clogged it
with many finnes: whose example in this
kind, *S. Paul* commends vnto vs: *As concer-*
ning maliciousnes be ye children. For children
haue their faults, yet commonly they pro-
ceed in them either of ignorance or infir-
mitie,

Gen. 4.7.

1. Cor. 14. 20.

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mitie, or both; and so long *God* is mercifull vnto vs. But it maliciousnesse and presumptuous finnes get a hand ouer vs, they wil stop the gate of heauen, and much ado shall we haue to passe: for this cause *straite is the gate, and few there be that go in thereat.*

3 As we haue made the gate strait through our default; so if we grow ouerbig, so much the worse. A threed may enter where a cammell cannot. These *Innocents* were little in bodie and mind, two yeares old and vnder: but the diuels disease is a swelling disease, and so infectious at the first, as our parents got it of him in *Paradise*; since which time it is growne hereditarie to the sonnes of *Adam*.

This cast *Nebuchadnezzar* out of his earthly kingdome: and it must be asswaged in vs, or we shall neuer enter the heauenly. The *Pharisy* swelled in conceit of his owne righteousness, and stucke fast: the *Publican* stooped, and went in. *Zacheus* was great in riches; he diminished himself by

Mat. 2. 16.

Dan. 4. 28.

Luke 16. 14.

Luke 19. 8.

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by restitution, by charitie to the poore, and passed. For this gate (it seems) is made for children onely to creepe through. *Verily I say vnto you, except ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdome of God.*

Mat. 18. 3.

CIRCVMCISION.



THe moneth of *Nisan* (when Israel should be sprinkled with the bloud of the Paschall Lambe) was to be reckened the first moneth of the yeare, that by so good a beginning, the rest of the yeare might the better be hallowed. It is not then amisse to beginne a new reuolution with the remembrance of those drops of bloud wherewith all the world was besprinkled, and no doubt sanctified, at the circumcision of the *Lambe of God*. They were but a few drops, I confesse, not the whole price of our redemption; yet suffi-

Exod. 12. 2.

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cient

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cient though for an earnest penie: the entire Sonne was after tendred vpon the Crosse at his passion. Yet because onely the bloud of *Christ*, and no other, was a sufficient ransome for the world, it was therefore very behouefull, that before he paied the ransome, he should approue himselfe to be the very true *Messias* and Redeemer; and this was performed at his Circumcision. For (saith the text) *when eight dayes were accomplished that they should circumcise the child, his name was called Iesus.* He was circumcised, to approue himselfe truly man, flesh of our flesh: and his name was called *Iesus*, which signifieth *God our Saviour*. Circumcised, that the Iewes might acknowledge him to be the Sonne of *Abraham*: called *Iesus*, that he might be receiued for the Sonne of *God*. Circumcised, to become subiect to the law: for *he that is circumcised (saith S. Paul) is bound to keepe the law.* Called *Iesus*, to saue vs from the curse of the law. Circumcised, to take
vpon

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vpon him the similitude of sinfull flesh,
(for that was a sacrament of originall
corruption.) Called *Iesus*, that he might
saue his people from their sinnes, as the
Angell expounded his name vnto *Ioseph*.

This Circumcision he first suffered for
vs in the flesh, and after performed the
true effect thereof within vs by his Spirit,
to wit, a *Circumcision made without hands* (as
the Apostle speakes) by putting off the
sinfull bodie of the flesh, through the cir-
cumcision of *Christ*, who by his spirituall
knife, first cutteth off the foreskinne of our
hearts, and makes them bleede, in sorrow
for our sinnes past: for Circumcision is a
bloudie thing (as *Zipporah* said to *Moses*)
and he that will be a true Israelite, his heart
must bleed. 2. The foreskin being remo-
ued, which hardned our hearts before,
there followeth a tenderesse of consci-
ence, which giueth a quicker sense of fu-
ture transgression. Next, he purgeth the
vine branches that they may bring forth

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more fruite : circumcising all superfluous and vaine cogitations in vs : lopping all luxurious affections, lest ouergrowing they might ouerthrow vs (like *Abfolons* haire) for want of cutting. So are we also of circumcised lips and eares, when our mouth shall speake no vanitie, and our eares relish the word of wisdom,

2. Cor. 5. 17.

Thus renewed in heart and affection, in soule and bodie (when *old things are passed, and all things are become new*) we may offer and present vnto God, the *poore widowes* offering of *two mites*, our soule and bodie to be a liuing sacrifice, and an acceptable New-yeares gift vnto him (since it is all that we haue) thereby assuring our selues that our names are knowne, and called, and written in heauen ; for the Spirit hath circumcised vs.

EPI-

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EPIPHANIE.



E may well conclude with the manifestation of Christ vnto the Gentiles. For without this, all that hath bene said is nothing vnto vs, who be (as the Apostle telleth vs) sinners of the Gētiles. But now God perswades *Iapheth* to dwell in the tents of *Shem*, that is, the Gentiles which came of *Iapheth*, to ioine themselues vnto the Church, which is the posteritie of *Shem*; for which thing father *Noah* prayed long since. Now *the morning takes hold of the corners of the earth* (as God said to *Iob*) *that the wicked might be shaken out of it*: for the Sun of righteousness shineth to the men of the East. Now *Ierusalem* begins to be inhabited without wals (as *Zachary* prophesied) when the Church shall not be hemmed within the precinct of that nation. Now the great mystery of godlinesse is reuealed, when

Gen. 9. 27.

Iob 38. 13.

Zachar. 2. 4.

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God manifested in the flesh, is preached to the Gentiles. For these VVise men were the first fruits of the Gentiles: whereupon followed a mightie haruest. The haruest indeede is great, *Go and teach all nations.* This word of life in *Dauids* time was but a light and a lanterne: now it is a morning Starre appearing in the East; and after, a Sunne of righteousness, which enlighteneth euery one that cometh into the world: whose beames directly behold these corners and ends of the world; vpon which the firmamentall Sunne looketh but asquint. Now is the Gospell preached (as *Christ* gaue in commandement) vnto euery creature; not vnto men onely, but euen to those barbarous nations which scarce caried the face of men, these silly creatures in times past vnacquainted with the lawes of ciuill humanitie. This is the meane crop: the first fruits were the wise men of the East: with whom *Christ* dealeth in their owne art: (that he might haue the faster hold of them) for he
lea-

Ps. 119. v. 105.
Nun.

Ioh. 1. 9.

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leadeth them by a starre, because they were Astronomers, and therefore able to discern a miracle in that kind. So he dealt with his owne Disciples by sea, stilling the tempest, and causing *Peter* to walke vpon the waters, because they were watermen: by those miraculous draughts of fish, because they were fishermen: hereby shewing himselfe to be that wise maister-fisher of soules, which fitteth his baite to euery kind.

VVe see the goodnesse of *God* vnto the Gentiles, in that *Christ* was manifested to those men: shall we learne the dutie of the Gentiles towards *God*, by the deuotion of these men vnto *Christ*? They came to worship him in heart, in bodie, and in goods: they opened their treasuries; and where the treasure is, there is the heart. The heart commands the bodie (as the Centurion his seruant) saying to the foot, Go, and it goeth, &c.

Neither did they come to worship *Christ*
emp-

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cut. 16, 16. 17

emptie handed, but brought with them such gifts as their countrey did affoord, gold, incense and myrrhe; *Aurum regi, Thus Deo, Myrrha morituro*. Gold, not so much to relieue the wants of his poore parents, (who were able to compasse no better a birth-chamber then a stable) as to shew themselues tributaries to his Maiesty, vnto whom was giuen *the heathen for his inheritance, and the ends of the world for his possessions*. Frankencense was brought, not so much to sweeten the place, as by incense to acknowledge the Deitie of the Son of God. Myrrhe was also offered with no lesse mysterie, then *Mary* her ointment at the day of his buriall: for it is to preferue his dead bodie from corruption, who being dead and buried, yet saw no corruption.

psal. 2, 8.

1 If then wee receiue *Christ* for our heauenly King, and Soueraigne of our foules, in obedience vnto his Euangelicall law, it is as much as if we brought gold, and much fine gold.

2 If

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2 If we offer vp *prayers* and thankgiuing, that is, saith *Dauid*, as *incense*, and the *uplifting* of our hands as an *euening sacrifice*.

Psal. 141. 2.

3 If in deuotion wee relieue the Church, and preserue the members of his mysticall bodie militant, from corruption, distresse and miserie; this is as Myrrhe vnto his naturall bodie.

These be our Christian oblations:

1 Obedience to his law, the fruite of faith.

2 Prayers and supplications, grounded vpon hope.

3 Deuotion and almes, proceeding from charitie towards our brethren.

Noster enim taleis reddit agellus opes.

These be all which our earthly mould by the influence of heauen can yeeld: which, that it may yeeld, looke we steadfastly (with *Elias*) vpon this *little clowde*, rising at the first no bigger then a mans hand, or the breadth of a Crib; from which

1. King. 18. 44

G

we

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wee desire and expect those manifold drops of the graces of his Spirit to fall vpon our hearts, that we may returne vnto him, together with his Father and Spirit, all praise, honour and thanks this time and for euer.

Amen.

FINIS.



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